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# Import-Export Operations in Veterinary Services

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## Import-Export Operations in Veterinary Services

Whenever animals are moved from one country to another, there is always the possibility that animal diseases may be moved with them. Pests and parasites can be, and have been, spread around the world by these same animal movements. For this reason, nearly every country imposes animal health regulations to govern the importation and exportation of animals--principally livestock and poultry.

This is certainly true of the United States. To protect our livestock and poultry industries, we administer a seemingly complex set of regulations for the importation of livestock, poultry, pet birds, some wild animals, and a wide variety of animal products. When livestock and poultry are exported, our regulations assure foreign buyers and their governments that only healthy animals are shipped from our shores.

These regulations are administered by the Import-Export Staff of Veterinary Services (VS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). This work involves a host of professional and technical employees in the field, at ports of entry or embarkation, and even in foreign nations. Even accredited veterinarians in private practice and government veterinarians in foreign countries are directly involved with the application of these rules. On occasion, diplomatic personnel, such as agricultural attaches, participate in international negotiations concerning import and export regulations.

APHIS-VS's import and export programs can be summed up in two statements of purpose:

Import Regulations are established to provide a front line of defense against those foreign

animal diseases, pests, and parasites that could weaken or destroy our domestic agriculture if they were to be introduced into this country.

Export Regulations assure the rest of the world that American livestock and poultry meet the highest standards of health--both our own standards and those of the receiving nations.

On one hand, we protect our resource base from outside attack. On the other, we maintain and improve our position as supplier of the best and healthiest livestock in the world.

Our basic authority comes from various Acts of Congress. We spell out our requirements in Title 9, Code of Federal Regulations, or "9 CFR," which details the agricultural regulations governing "Animals and Animal Products." Parts 91 through 97 of 9 CFR cover the import and export regulations, which include:

- Procedures for export health testing and certification;
- Testing, certification, inspection, and quarantine for imported animals and animal products;
- Designated ports of entry;
- Special measures to keep serious foreign livestock diseases out of the United States;
- Countries designated free of certain livestock diseases, or those countries affected by several major diseases.

We also designate purebred livestock breeds that are recognized by USDA, and are therefore eligible for duty-free entry into the United States.

There are, of course, other Government regulations that affect the importation or exportation of animals. The U.S. Public Health

Service, for example, regulates the entry of animals or birds that can transmit diseases to humans--such as birds of the parrot family (psittacines), plus dogs, cats, and nonhuman primates (monkeys and apes). The Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits the importation of rare and endangered animal species--not only live animals, but also furs, skins, and animal trophies.

### Animal Imports

Let's get down to specifics.

First--Imports:

Our agricultural import regulations begin with the basic policy that we do whatever we can to keep out diseases, pests, and parasites that might injure U.S. agricultural production. This means that we refuse or restrict any animal, animal product, or associated wastes, straw, or bedding that could introduce a major disease into our domestic livestock and poultry populations.

In some cases we ban all imports of certain animals from countries affected with a particular disease. An example is swine from countries where hog cholera is known to exist.

In any event, when animals are imported, we insist on certain basic procedures:

- Examinations, tests, and health certifications by veterinary officials in the country of origin.
- Examinations by our own APHIS-VS veterinarians at the port of entry.
- And further tests and port-of-entry isolation at our animal import facilities, depending on the animal species and the country of origin.

Normally only domestic livestock, poultry, and birds are covered by these rules. However, wild ruminants, swine, equines, and birds must also meet our animal import requirements. The regulations apply also to animal semen and hatching eggs. Special requirements apply to organisms and vectors of potentially destructive diseases, which are permitted entry only on a case-by-case basis for scientific purposes.

Generally speaking, the entry procedures for animals from Mexico and Canada are not as rigorous as those for animals from overseas nations. Thanks to close working relationships with Canadian and Mexican veterinary officials, we import eligible livestock without port-of-entry quarantines and do not require import permits to be obtained in advance. One big exception is the importation of poultry and other birds from Mexico; these must be quarantined and tested for exotic Newcastle disease. Swine from Mexico are barred entirely because of hog cholera.

We have 16 crossing points on the Mexican border and 23 on the Canadian border where APHIS veterinarians examine and process animal imports. Cattle from Mexico must be dipped as a precaution against cattle fever ticks, which transmit bovine piroplasmiasis.

Animals from countries other than Mexico or Canada face somewhat stiffer entry procedures. These are necessary because we cannot work as closely with government veterinarians in other nations, where it is difficult to monitor the way veterinary tests and examinations are performed. And in the event we refuse an animal, or a whole shipment, it's much more difficult to ship animals back to Europe or Asia than it is to turn them around at a Canadian or Mexican border station.

For this reason, we require most animal import shipments to be accompanied by import permits



obtained in advance. And, of course, all animal imports must have health certification papers.

Only three ports of entry have USDA-operated quarantine facilities for general livestock and poultry imports. These are located at New York (with the animal import center located at Stewart Airport, near Newburgh, N.Y.): Miami, Fla.; and Honolulu, Hawaii. A special offshore, high security facility, the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center, has been established at Key West, Fla., so that livestock can be safely quarantined when imported from countries affected with foot-and-mouth disease.

Horses may be quarantined at the New York, Miami, and Honolulu USDA animal import centers. They also may come in through facilities operated by the importers, provided those facilities are located at a U.S. Customs port of entry, are approved in advance by APHIS-VS officials, and can be supervised with available APHIS-VS personnel. Horses originating from countries affected with African horse sickness may be quarantined only at the New York Animal Import Center.

All zoo animals subject to USDA import regulations must be quarantined at New York.

Commercial bird shipments can be handled at 15 ports where APHIS authorizes commercially operated quarantine facilities, which are under USDA supervision. Personally owned pet birds must pass similar quarantines at special USDA facilities established at nine ports of entry.

Let's look at the different types of animal imports that are of greatest concern.

## Cattle

When we import cattle, we uniformly check for brucellosis and tuberculosis, two insidious

diseases against which we have ongoing eradication programs in the United States. Tests for these two diseases are generally required for all adult cattle, regardless of the nation of origin. However, in the case of Canada, the regulations are more complex and involve vaccinations, herd health certifications, and distinctions between beef and dairy breeds.

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is a major concern whenever cattle are moved internationally. This disease, which affects all cloven-hooved animals (ruminants and swine), occurs in most of Europe, all of continental Asia, Africa, South America, and on many island archipelagos. It is highly contagious--it can be carried on the boots and clothing of farmworkers--and although not usually fatal is extremely debilitating. Were FMD to become established here in the United States, which is free of this disease, it could add 25 percent to the cost of producing meat and milk.

For these reasons, prior to 1980 we maintained a total ban on all cattle imports from FMD-affected countries. In that year we established the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center at Key West, Fla., where we could import cattle from FMD-affected nations under conditions of maximum security and isolation. Such cattle, in lots of up to 400 animals, must be isolated and pre-tested under APHIS-VS supervision at an approved facility in the country of origin. They then must be held at the Truman Animal Import Center for a lengthy quarantine, and further testing and examinations. During the quarantine they are mingled with a select "sentinel" group of FMD-susceptible U.S. cattle and hogs. If any FMD-infection or exposure is found, the entire lot of imported cattle is denied entry.

Although we now have a safe procedure for importing cattle from FMD-affected countries, no such relief has been found for cattle from nations affected with rinderpest, an equally

contagious and usually fatal disease of ruminants. All cattle from those countries are barred from importation into the United States.

Cattle from FMD and rinderpest-free countries, other than Canada and Mexico, are imported through the New York, Miami, and Honolulu animal import centers. Before leaving their country of origin, they must be examined and certified free of communicable diseases, pests, and parasites. At the port of entry they are inspected by the APHIS-VS port veterinarian, and upon arrival at the animal import center are sprayed or dipped and given a thorough examination, and tested for specified diseases. A 30-day quarantine is imposed before they are released for entry into the United States.

### Sheep and Goats

Imports of sheep and goats are severely restricted. Prohibitions apply to these animals because of FMD and rinderpest. And, of course, they must be free of other communicable diseases, pests and parasites.

One disease in particular, scrapie, is a major cause for concern with respect to sheep and goats. It is a slow-acting virus disease of the central nervous system that is invariably fatal, yet it may take months or even years before its symptoms appear. Often the disease is transmitted to the animal's progeny, following bloodlines for generations.

We have an active scrapie eradication program underway in the United States. However, we lack a reliable diagnostic test with which to screen animal imports, and must prohibit sheep and goats from scrapie-affected countries. The net effect is an almost worldwide ban on sheep and goat imports.

Currently we accept sheep and goat imports only from Canada, which has an eradication program

similar to ours, and from New Zealand and the Trust Territories of the Pacific, which are free of the disease. Sheep from Australia are free of scrapie, but are denied entry because of contagious caprine pleuropneumonia.

## Swine

Imports of swine are restricted to just a few nations: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, the Bahamas, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific. This select group of eligibles is all that is left after we exclude countries affected by major foreign swine diseases found throughout the world.

FMD is one of the most serious threats to swine wherever the disease occurs, just as it is to ruminants. Swine vesicular disease produces symptoms almost identical to FMD and is an equally serious threat. One of the worst swine diseases in the world is African swine fever, which is difficult to diagnose (it resembles hog cholera), impossible to treat, and extremely resistant to eradication efforts; within recent years this devastating plague has crossed the Atlantic and caused tremendous losses in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba.

And finally there is hog cholera, a highly contagious and fatal disease of swine that was eradicated from the United States after an intensive 15-year campaign. Today it remains enzootic throughout most of the world, occurring in countries as close as Mexico and Cuba. Although tests can diagnose an overt outbreak, they cannot spot the disease when it is incubating in swine.

For all of the above reasons, it is difficult to import swine into the United States.

## Horses

Less restrictive regulations are imposed on horses, generally speaking, than on imported food-producing animals. Nevertheless, precautions are taken to keep out a number of equine diseases including dourine, glanders, equine infectious anemia, equine piroplasmiasis, Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEE), African horse sickness, and contagious equine metritis (CEM). We also check against the introduction of ticks and other parasites.

"Less restrictive" is a term that does not apply when horses originate in countries affected with African horse sickness. These animals may be imported only through the port of New York, and must pass a 60-day quarantine.

Tight restrictions also apply when horses originate in countries affected with CEM. This bacterial disease is transmitted primarily when horses are bred; thus, yearlings, weanlings, and geldings are exempt. Stallions and mares, however, are subject to a complex set of rules that involve country-of-origin health certifications, prescribed tests and treatments, and post-entry treatments under State laws in accordance with formal agreements between State animal health agencies and USDA. Countries affected with CEM are: Australia, Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Horses from Canada may enter the United States with a Canadian government veterinary health certificate and a negative test for equine infectious anemia (EIA). Horses from Mexico must have health certificates and must pass negative tests for EIA, dourine, glanders, and equine piroplasmiasis, plus a precautionary treatment against ticks. Horses from other countries in the Western Hemisphere must be tested the same as Mexican horses, and in



addition held for at least 7 days as a check against VEE.

Similar testing and certification requirements are imposed on horses from other parts of the world, but without the check against VEE. They are quarantined until tests are completed at USDA animal import centers in New York, Miami, or Honolulu, or at importer-operated facilities at U.S. ports of entry. Privately operated facilities must be approved in advance, must meet USDA isolation and health requirements, and may be used only if APHIS-VS personnel are available to supervise the quarantine. Port-of-entry quarantines normally last from 3 to 7 days, except for those involving African horse sickness and CEM.

### Zoo Animals

USDA import regulations apply to zoo animals if they are susceptible to, or are capable of, transmitting diseases of livestock and poultry. In effect, this means that wild ruminants, swine, equines, and all types of birds must meet USDA animal import requirements that assure freedom from such diseases. Diseases of major concern include: FMD (ruminants and swine), rinderpest (ruminants), African swine fever (swine), hog cholera (swine), African horse sickness (equines), and exotic Newcastle disease (birds).

If wild ruminants, swine, and equines originate in a country affected with one of the major diseases, they must pass an intensive quarantine, testing, and certification procedure before leaving the overseas port of embarkation. Once the animals are cleared for shipment, they may then be imported only through the port of New York, where they must pass further tests and quarantines. After passing port of entry clearance, they are then consigned only to USDA-approved zoological parks, where they remain under permanent quarantine. Special require-

ments for each type of zoo animal are spelled out on the import permit.

If wild ruminants, swine, and equines originate in a country that is free of the major foreign animal diseases, their importation follows much the same procedure as for domestic livestock.

Wild animals are also subject to Federal regulations issued to prevent the exploitation of rare or endangered species. These are administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Birds for zoological parks are covered by regulations that affect all bird imports, as indicated below.

### Birds and Poultry

Bird imports are a major problem, primarily because of one devastating disease: Exotic Newcastle disease. Found in many countries, it can be carried and transmitted by all species of birds, even though some birds may show no signs of illness. Exotic Newcastle, known technically as viscerotropic velogenic Newcastle disease (VVND), has disastrous consequences when introduced into poultry flocks. In one of the worst U.S. outbreaks in southern California during 1971-73, USDA had to quarantine 45,000 square miles and destroy over 12 million infected or exposed birds, mostly laying hens, before the disease was eradicated. Eradication cost about \$56 million.

We can't afford more outbreaks like that. The outbreaks we have experienced--and eradicated--were all traced to imported pet birds. Yet there is a strong demand for exotic pet birds--which must often be imported. We also need to import poultry and hatching eggs to maintain a healthy poultry industry. All of these needs must be met--without importing the disease.

To provide a safe way of importing poultry and other birds, we require strict standards for their entry. They must be accompanied by a USDA import permit obtained in advance, and must have health certification signed by government veterinarians in the country from which they are shipped. They must be examined by an APHIS port veterinarian at the port of entry. All birds must pass a minimum 30-day quarantine at the port of entry, during which time they are tested for exotic Newcastle disease. If all tests and examinations are negative, they are released to the owners or importers at the end of the quarantine. Whenever exotic Newcastle disease is found in lots of imported birds, the birds are refused entry, and further shipments from the country of origin are barred for 90 days.

Poultry must be quarantined at one of the three USDA-operated animal import centers (New York, Miami, and Honolulu). Personally owned pet birds are quarantined in special individual isolation units ("isolettes") at USDA pet bird import centers in nine ports of entry (New York; Miami; Brownsville, Laredo, and El Paso, Tex.; Nogales, Ariz.; San Ysidro and Los Angeles, Calif.; and Honolulu). Bird owners are charged a fee to defray the cost of quarantines.

USDA facilities do not have enough space to accommodate the demand for bird imports, so the Department has authorized commercial importers to construct private quarantine facilities at 15 designated ports of entry. These must meet federal standards and be operated under USDA supervision. Research birds are assigned to designated research facilities, which must meet standards prescribed for each particular shipment.

Quarantines, except for personally owned pet birds, are operated on an "all-in, all-out" basis; the birds must arrive together and must be released together. If one bird is found infected, the entire lot is refused entry and no



further shipments will be accepted from the country of origin for 90 days. Special "isolette" units for pet birds permit them to be handled on an individual basis, without exposing other birds to disease.

Hatching eggs come in under the same certification requirements as poultry, but the chicks that are hatched must be held in quarantine at USDA-approved hatcheries until they are found to be free of exotic Newcastle disease.

Bird imports from Canada are not subject to such stringent requirements, since health conditions for poultry and other birds in Canada are similar to those in the United States, and Canada imposes equally strict rules on the importation of birds. Canadian poultry and other birds must have a health certificate issued by a Canadian government veterinarian; however, import permits are not needed unless the birds are shipped in by air. Personally owned pet birds can be brought in from Canada simply by an owner's certification that the birds have been healthy and have been kept separate from other birds for the preceding 90 days.

In addition to these USDA regulations, imported birds are subject to certain other rules. The U.S. Public Health Service requires birds of the parrot family (psittacines) to be treated with medicated feed in order to prevent the spread of psittacosis (also known as parrot fever, or ornithosis), which is transmissible to man. They also limit the number of personally owned pet psittacines that can be imported to two per family per year.

Also, the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, enforces laws prohibiting the importation of rare or endangered species of animals, including birds. This means that Interior officials must check exotic birds quarantined at U.S. ports of entry to be sure they are not on the endangered species list.

Even with all of these regulations, our biggest problem with birds is smuggling. Legitimate bird importation is expensive, and the supply apparently does not keep up with the demand. Smuggling, if successful, can be highly profitable. Even if the smuggler is caught, the penalties are often far less severe than for some other offenses, such as drug violations.

As a result of this situation, a substantial business has developed in the smuggling of birds. APHIS officials work closely with the U.S. Customs Service to stop this traffic, and some significant arrests have been made. Birds seized in these arrests are quarantined under USDA control, and if negative to exotic Newcastle disease, they are sold at auction to recover handling costs for the Government.

Meanwhile, we maintain liaison with our agricultural attaches to keep informed of the efforts foreign governments are making to control the export of birds. When we find exotic Newcastle infection in a shipment of imported birds, we notify the country of origin that further shipments will not be permitted for a period of 90 days.

#### Animal Semen

As an import item, animal semen should be considered as much a potential disease threat as live animal imports. Semen can transmit many diseases. For that reason we establish strict standards for the collection, handling, and shipping of animal semen; these are spelled out in agreements between USDA and foreign governments. Basic to these agreements is the establishment of approved artificial insemination centers under the supervision of government veterinarians of the country of origin. Donor animals must meet certain test and health certification requirements, and the semen must be identified and handled in a prescribed manner.

Import permits are required for all semen shipments.

Semen collection and import agreements have included safe procedures for imports from countries affected with foot-and-mouth disease. These provide for semen collection at special quarantine centers under the direct supervision of APHIS Veterinary Services employees. Additional FMD tests are required for the donor animals, tight security is maintained, and careful collection, testing, and handling of the semen is prescribed. Before semen is released for use in the United States, further testing is done at USDA's Plum Island Animal Disease Center on Plum Island, N.Y., the only place in the United States where research and testing can be done on foreign animal diseases.

To date, only bovine semen has been imported under these provisions.

#### Animal Products

Controlling live animal imports is only part of the job. If we are to keep animal diseases and parasites out of the United States, we must also control the entry of animal products and other materials that could also infect our domestic livestock and poultry. Our chief concern is over disease agents that could contaminate food-wastes fed to swine or infect products that are used in animal feed formulations. Imports of veterinary biologics are regulated under a strict licensing procedure administered by the APHIS-VS Veterinary Biologics Staff.

Control of animal products begins by prohibiting fresh, chilled, or frozen meats, and any fresh milk from countries where rinderpest or FMD are known to occur. The same goes for fresh, chilled, or frozen pork from countries affected with hog cholera, African swine fever, and swine vesicular disease. This ban includes food in

travelers' baggage and in the mail, as well as commercial shipments of meat.

Meats can be made safe for entry if they are processed by prescribed methods that eliminate disease organisms. Processes vary according to the disease that could be involved, but in every case we require national veterinary officials of the exporting country to certify that the required processes were followed to the letter. Here in the United States, we regularly inspect and test samples from these shipments. Lots that don't meet our standards are refused. If we find significant problems it usually means followup consultations with the foreign officials.

Approved processes usually involve heat treatment, canning, drying, or curing. Undocumented meat and milk products from countries affected by foreign animal diseases usually are confiscated. Unless foreign travelers can document the fact that these goods are boneless, cooked, canned, and shelf stable, it's best to leave these exotic but ineligible foods back in their home countries.

Even garbage and leftover foods on aircraft and ships are subject to these same rules, which are enforced by APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine inspectors at all U.S. ports of entry.

Not all animal products can be processed abroad to meet our specifications. The potential for contamination may be too great, or special processing within the United States may be required. So we permit some products to be imported as "restricted" items. These may enter the United States under special conditions specified by USDA: They are placed under U.S. Government seals at the port of entry, shipped directly to a USDA-approved plant or warehouse, and processed by USDA-prescribed methods. Some

restricted products may be distributed only to qualified users.

Hides and skins are among the most important categories of imported animal products in terms of quantity. Glands and other animal secretions are imported for pharmaceutical and medicinal preparations. There are significant imports of restricted dairy products and bones. We also make provisions for importing hunting trophies. Materials imported for research, experimental purposes, and analysis must meet special requirements for each importation.

Hay, straw, and animal feeds from infected countries are restricted; however, clean manufactured articles of hay or straw are permitted unrestricted entry.

### Organisms and Vectors

We are concerned with the importation of special products lumped under the term "organisms and vectors." Organisms are disease-producing agents, such as bacteria and viruses, or other material containing these agents. Vectors are the various types of animal life--such as ticks, lice, insects, or laboratory animals--that can transmit diseases from one animal to another. Also regulated under this category are such diverse products as blood sera, pharmaceuticals, animal tissues, cell cultures, and culture media.

Since organisms and vectors have a high potential for transmitting disease, they are closely regulated. Some agents, biologics, or vaccines of serious foreign animal diseases are prohibited entirely--with the exception of USDA experimental work or foreign vaccine storage at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, off the end of Long Island, N.Y.

Permits to import organisms and vectors are issued only to U.S. residents. Before permis-



sion is granted, the prospective importer must disclose the agent involved and the purpose for which it will be used. APHIS officials will evaluate the laboratory where it will be used to see if security is adequate to prevent the escape of the organism or vector.

The work of APHIS Veterinary Services is tied closely with other agencies concerned with prevention, control, or eradication of diseases. Primarily we work with the U.S. Public Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services, on diseases that could be transmitted from animals to humans, or on organisms and vectors that involve human diseases. And, of course, we cooperate with the U.S. Department of the Interior on regulations for the protection of wildlife.

Our restrictions on animal imports may seem extreme to some--until we remember the stake we have in good animal health. Here in the United States, we have eradicated--wiped out--12 major livestock diseases or pests. We have achieved this thanks to vigorous eradication programs, but it would not have been possible without our efforts to keep those diseases and others from entering the country and reinfecting our healthy livestock and poultry.

Because of our strong import controls, we remain free of serious livestock plagues that vastly increase the cost of food throughout the rest of the world. We enjoy a significant advantage in being free of such burdens as foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest, hog cholera, African swine fever, exotic Newcastle disease, and many others.

### Animal Exports

When we export animals, however, the shoe is on the other foot. Just as we insist that only healthy livestock and poultry be imported into our country, we have an obligation to see that

only healthy animals are shipped abroad. Besides, it's good business. We have a reputation to maintain for producing healthy livestock. We have an enviable position in the world market, and we want to keep it.

Yet we do have some animal health problems that could endanger our position if we were not careful in examining animals for export. Brucellosis and tuberculosis are still with us, even though incidence is at a very low level.

So exported animals must be tested for those diseases. Sheep must not originate from a scrapie-infected flock. All exported animals must be examined and found free of communicable diseases and exposure thereto.

We are also careful that these animals carry no parasites, such as ticks or mites, which could transmit diseases or infest other parts of the world. And to the extent we are able, we cooperate fully with the veterinary services of the receiving nations to meet their health requirements to the letter.

Since we are concerned equally with our own health standards and those for other nations, our export health testing and certification must meet two sets of criteria: Ours and the receiving country. However, the export procedure is handled as one continuous operation, involving not only APHIS officials, but practicing veterinarians accredited by USDA.

A look at the criteria for cattle shows our USDA requirements to be relatively easy to follow: A veterinary examination at the farm of origin or the collecting point, negative tests within prescribed time limits for brucellosis and tuberculosis (unless herd certification or vaccinations make this unnecessary), health certificates signed by the accredited veterinarian, endorsement by the export veterinarian at the APHIS-VS area office, and a final examination at the port

of embarkation by an APHIS veterinarian. All livestock must be individually identified, and a 5-hour rest is required for animals at the port before they are loaded.

Similar procedures apply for other types of livestock, with variations in the required tests. However, the criteria imposed by foreign governments can be quite complex. Whenever possible, we workout agreements in advance with these governments, usually through face-to-face consultations with the nation's veterinary officials, assisted by our agricultural attaches and other diplomatic officials.

It is nearly impossible for an exporter or an accredited veterinarian to keep abreast of all the rules for each and every overseas livestock shipment. So to avoid delay and frustration, it is essential that the exporter and/or accredited veterinarian contact the APHIS Veterinary Services area office at the earliest possible time. For special problems they may contact APHIS-VS officials at the national office in Hyattsville, Md. All these offices keep a current file of more than 100 agreements we have negotiated with some 65 foreign governments. Each has assigned an APHIS veterinarian the responsibility for working with exporters and their veterinarians and for checking export health tests and certifications. In the end, it is the APHIS area veterinarian-in-charge who endorses the export health papers, without which livestock cannot leave this country.

## Exports to Canada and Mexico

As with imports, exports to Mexico and Canada are handled more simply and more quickly than shipments to overseas nations. There are several significant differences when animals are shipped across our land borders. One is that exported livestock do not need an APHIS veterinary examination at the port of export; once the health tests, certification, and USDA



endorsements are completed, the animals move directly to the border where they are examined by the Canadian or Mexican veterinary officials. Another difference is the significant volume of animals being shipped directly to slaughter across our borders; these do not have to meet as stringent a set of rules as animals shipped for feeding operations, breeding, or other purposes. We also have special provisions for animals entering Canada temporarily for races, rodeos, shows, and exhibitions; and also for U.S. livestock passing through Canada for reentry into the United States, and for horses transiting Mexico.

Canada and Mexico are by far our biggest customers for exported livestock and poultry, so it's important to note special health requirements imposed on shipments to these countries. Exports to Mexico move with few special problems. However, Canada has set some standards that go beyond our own export rules. Livestock shipments to Canada are subject to special testing and certification requirements to show the animals free of certain diseases. These include bluetongue for cattle, sheep, and goats; brucellosis for cattle and goats; anaplasmosis for cattle; equine infectious anemia for horses; and pseudorabies for swine.

Animals shipped into Canada for rodeos, shows, and exhibitions can remain for up to 90 days without needing Canadian health tests and certificates when they reenter the United States.

### Export Clearance Procedure

Successful exports, particularly those to overseas nations, require close coordination between the exporter, the accredited veterinarian, APHIS officials, the freight forwarder, the broker, the insurance underwriter, and the carrier. Among the most common causes of costly delay is failure to conduct all the required health tests or failure to allow

enough time for completion of the diagnostic laboratory tests. Animals cannot move to the port of embarkation until APHIS endorses the health papers, whether or not a plane or ship may be waiting.

So let's see how the health requirements can best be met for an international livestock shipment. As soon as a deal has been made the exporter or the accredited veterinarian should get in touch with the APHIS Veterinary Services area office.

The APHIS export veterinarian at that office will provide all the information needed to meet the health requirements, including any last-minute changes imposed by the foreign government.

From this point on, health matters should be handled by the accredited veterinarian--the practicing veterinarian employed by the exporter to examine, test, and vaccinate animals, to certify herd origin data and other health information, and to supervise any required preexport isolations. The accredited veterinarian must see that serum and other samples are properly taken, identified, packaged, and sent to a USDA-approved veterinary diagnostic laboratory. He or she must personally administer tuberculosis tests and other required inoculations and examinations. He or she should see that enough time is allowed for the tests to be run, and throughout the entire operation should maintain contact with the APHIS area office.

The accredited veterinarian is the key to completion of the export health requirements. APHIS is the final judge as to whether or not the job has indeed been done. The last step before the USDA endorsement is a review of all information, including diagnostic test reports, by the APHIS veterinarian in the area office. If everything is satisfactory, the USDA endorse-

ment is granted and the papers returned to the accredited veterinarian.

The animals are now free to move to the port of embarkation. The APHIS export veterinarian at the port is notified of the time of arrival. The livestock are then shipped in clean and disinfected conveyances. At the port (if it is not a border crossing), they will be held for at least 5 hours in facilities that meet USDA standards. These must provide adequate shelter, sanitation, food and water, examination area, chutes, and loading ramps. APHIS rules assure not only that animals are healthy when they leave the farm; they must also be transported and held for loading in conditions that are healthy, safe, and humane.

The APHIS port veterinarian will give the livestock one last examination, and inspect the facilities and equipment on board the carrier. If the animals are healthy and the shipping arrangements are satisfactory the veterinarian authorizes the animals to be loaded. The loading itself is done under the veterinarian's supervision.

So livestock and poultry move into and out of the United States under an often complex set of regulations administered by APHIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture. We even, on occasion, get into the business of officially recognizing livestock breeds and books of registry in foreign countries; this permits certain breeding livestock to enter the country dutyfree.

These rules, both import and export, may cause some headaches, they may add to the cost of shipping, and doubtless try the patience of many people. But they are worth it, and they are necessary. They have kept our herds and flocks free of disastrous livestock plagues. They have permitted us to develop some of the best and healthiest livestock in the world.

This, in turn, has enabled us to develop and hold an enviable position in the international market for quality livestock. Our reputation has been won by holding to the finest standards of animal health within the United States and whenever animals are imported or exported.

Note: Disease status of countries, as well as import-export regulations, are subject to constant change. An update of any information contained in this booklet is available from APHIS Veterinary Services officials.

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